



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER 2005-056

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE EXECUTIVE ORDER

WHEREAS, the State of New Mexico is committed to affording all of its residents, including communities of color and low-income communities, fair treatment and meaningful involvement in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, income or education level;

WHEREAS, the State of New Mexico is further committed to promoting the protection of human health and the environment, empowerment via public involvement in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies, and the dissemination of information related to the environment to inform and educate, especially in people of color and low-income communities;

WHEREAS, environmental justice issues exist in New Mexico, as they do in other states, causing concern and creating problems for some communities, businesses and households that bear the impacts of air and water contamination, noise, crowding, reduced quality of life, and depressed land and housing values – many of which could be mitigated by better siting decisions and processes;

WHEREAS, the cumulative impact of multiple sources of exposure to environmental hazards in low-income and people of color communities, and the roles of multiple agencies in addressing the causes and factors that compromise environmental health and quality of life in these communities require an interagency response; and

WHEREAS, the Federal government has underscored the importance of Environmental Justice in Executive Order 12898 and created the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council to integrate environmental justice into federal policies, programs, initiatives and activities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Richardson, Governor of the State of New Mexico, by the virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. All cabinet level departments and boards and commissions that are involved in decisions that may affect environmental quality and public health shall provide meaningful opportunities for involvement to all people regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, income, or education level. Programs and policies to protect and promote protection of human health and the environment shall be reviewed annually to ensure that program implementation and dissemination of information meet the needs of low-income and communities of color, and seek to address disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards and risks.

2. All cabinet level departments and boards and commissions shall recognize the need to communicate in writing and orally significant public health and environmental information in languages other than English by

ensuring that all publicly disseminated information, including websites, is available in Spanish and in English, at a minimum, and in tribal languages and dialects as appropriate for areas of the state where these languages are spoken.

3. All relevant cabinet level departments and boards and commissions shall utilize available environmental and public health data to address impacts in low-income communities and communities of color as well as in determining siting, permitting, compliance, enforcement, and remediation of existing and proposed industrial and commercial facilities.

4. There is hereby created a multi-agency task force, to be named the Environmental Justice Task Force, which shall include designees from the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), State Engineer's Office, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health, New Mexico Department of Transportation, Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, Department of Public Safety, Department of Labor, and Department of Education. The NMED shall serve as the lead agency. The Task Force shall be an advisory body, the purpose of which is to make recommendations to State Agencies regarding actions to be taken to address environmental justice issues consistent with agencies' existing statutory and regulatory authority. The Task Force shall develop policies and procedures for communities to request the Task Force to address environmental justice issues in those communities. The Task Force is authorized to consult with, and expand its membership to, other agencies and stakeholders as needed to address concerns raised in affected communities. The Task Force shall meet not later than March 31, 2006 and shall report Task Force accomplishments to the Office of the Governor not later than December 31 of each year.

5. The NMED shall continue to work with the existing Environmental Justice Policy Committee, whose mission is to make recommendations regarding Environmental Justice issues in New Mexico to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of NMED.

6. All state agencies shall assist as appropriate in implementing this Order and achieving its purposes. The actions mandated as a result of this Executive Order shall be accomplished within the bounds of, and consistent with, the relevant agency's existing statutory and regulatory authority.

7. Nothing in this Executive Order is intended to create a private right of action to enforce any provision of this Order or any Action Plan developed pursuant to this Order; nor is this Order intended to diminish any existing legal rights or remedies.

8. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

ATTEST:



REBECCA VIGIL-GIRON
SECRETARY OF STATE



DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE THIS
18TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2005

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE GREAT
SEAL OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO



BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR OF NEW MEXICO